

SECRET

31 AUG 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: New York Times Article on "Unusual" Soviet
Space Launches

1. Although this article appeared in the open press, unclassified, our confirmation of the information involves intelligence sources and must be classified Secret. The article is essentially correct in the details of the "unusual" Soviet space launches; however, there was an additional launch on 22 March 1967 which failed to reach orbit, making a total of 8 flight tests to date.

2. The Times article implies that the Soviets are testing a weapon system which will be stored in space and deorbited on command in the event of war. We believe that they are testing concepts related to a weapon system that would be stored on the ground until the order to attack is given, and would be brought down on target during the initial orbit. This judgment is based on the nature of the flight tests; the limitations of the vehicle involved; the lack of a suitable command and control network for a space stored system; and a technical assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the two strategic concepts.

4. The launch vehicle as presently configured does not have sufficient energy to attack the U.S. on the initial orbit, therefore, we believe modifications requiring additional flight testing will be necessary. This weapon system is not expected to become operational before late 1968 or 1969.

DAVID S. BRANDWEIN
Director

Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center

SECRET

